

Jersey region for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Mr. de Blasio fights the tough fights and wins. As a member of the New York City Council, he continues to serve the people of New York, and specifically the residents of Brooklyn's 39th Council District. Mr. de Blasio's most recent accomplishment is becoming the New York City Democratic Party's Public Advocate-Elect.

Throughout Mr. de Blasio's career, the common thread that runs through is his desire to better the quality of life for all New Yorkers by improving public education, creating affordable housing and fighting discrimination based on race, religion, physical disability or sexual orientation. He has been instrumental in directing increased federal funding for affordable housing, senior citizen housing and economic development in the region.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing New York City Councilman Bill de Blasio, who is expected to be our City's Public Advocate. He is a dynamic community leader and true public servant.

#### A TRIBUTE TO EDNA M. JOHNSON

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 16, 2009*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Edna M. Johnson, a model citizen and extraordinary leader in the community.

Edna Johnson was born and raised in a small steel mill town in Clairton, Pennsylvania, the youngest of nine children. Ms. Johnson began singing at the age of seven and, because of her love of music, Ms. Johnson began singing in several different locales, including church and eventually as member of the group "Naomi Shelton and the Gospel Queens".

After graduating from Clairton High School, she relocated to New York City. She found solace with her church family when she joined Broadway United Church of Christ, where she served as Deacon, Trustee and Steward. Never forgetting the importance of education that her parents instilled in her, Ms. Johnson's church family assisted her with attending Pace University. She would later receive her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science.

Ms. Johnson has always understood the importance of service, working as a parent organizer in the public schools and as a tenant organizer. She was the first to successfully implement the Neighborhood Revitalization Program with New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. While living in Manhattan, she became chairperson of the Tenant Association in Clinton Towers for five years. She also chaired the 79th Precinct Community Council for six years, where she helped facilitate a more cohesive relationship between the people and the local police.

Always eager to serve, she is currently a member of Community Board 3 and has received several citations for perfect attendance. In her first year on the Board, she was Chairperson of the Police, Fire and Safety Committee. Ms. Johnson now serves on the Health Hospital and Social Science Committee. She also serves as first Vice President for Northeast Brooklyn Housing Company Inc. and Second Vice President for the African American Planning Commission Inc.

Ms. Johnson currently serves as Special Assistant to the Honorable EDOLPHUS "Ed" TOWNS, navigating federal agencies on behalf of hundreds of constituents and serving as a liaison to the broader community.

In recognition of her services, she has received citations from Congressman EDOLPHUS TOWNS, City Councilmember Annette Robinson, The New York City Police Department, The 79th Precinct Council, The Brooklyn Job Corps, A.I.D.P. at P.S.26, Hebron Baptist Church, Greater Cross Road Baptist Church, Bridge Street Development Corporation, The Bedford Stuyvesant Community Block Association and The National Night Out Committee.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Edna M. Johnson, a tireless community organizer, and dedicated servant of the public.

#### EXTENDING AUTHORITY TO BUILD VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTER

SPEECH OF

### HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 13, 2009*

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R.

3689, a bill to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. to establish a Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center will pay a further tribute to the men and women who defended our nation's freedom by serving in the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. Currently, there are three other monuments that mark the sacrifice paid by these brave individuals on the National Mall. They are the Three Soldiers statue, the Vietnam Women's memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Just last year, there were over 3.8 million visitors to these memorials, and I believe that constructing a visitor center to facilitate their passion for our veterans is a noble cause.

The visitor center will become one of the largest war memorials in Washington, DC at 25,000 square feet. It will be built underground in front of the Lincoln Memorial and may include a movie theater, a three-dimensional battle scene, mementos left at the memorial, and a wall where pictures of slain soldiers will be displayed on their birthdays. The center will surely prove to be a fantastic tribute to the service and sacrifices made by veterans of the Vietnam War and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the brave men and women who have sacrificed for our present freedoms deserve our fullest support. Our nation's service men and women represent the best our country has to offer, and they must be treated with the respect and honor they deserve. As we ask these courageous soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—and their families—to do more and more, it's only right we continue doing all we can for them. Creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center is another act of appreciation for our veterans and a reminder of the superior job our troops perform for America at home and abroad. It is my hope that we will continue to do all we can and more for the members of our Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.